

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Rep. Slaughter Announces NEA Grant Supporting the "Big Read" in Buffalo

Buffalo, NY - Rep. Louise M. Slaughter (D-Fairport), Chairwoman of the House Rules Committee, today announced a \$15,000 grant from the National Endowment for the Arts to the Just Literacy Center to help support the return of the Big Read project to Buffalo. The Big Read is part of an ongoing, nationwide effort by the NEA to foster literacy and encourage reading.

"I have always been a strong believer in the value of reading as one of the key foundations of the strength of our community," Rep. Slaughter said at a press conference in Buffalo announcing the project. **"I am excited that Buffalo will be undertaking another one of America's classic novels, and I look forward to hearing about the discussions it will provoke. I hope that many will participate, learn a lot, and have fun doing it."**

Last year, Buffalo was one of ten cities chosen to participate in a pilot program of the Big Read. Due in large part to the success of the program in 2006, in which thousands of Buffalonians read *Fahrenheit 451*, the Just Buffalo Literacy Center has again been awarded an NEA grant to bring the Big Read back to Buffalo. This year, participants will read Zora Neale Hurston's *Their Eyes Were Watching God*.

Laurie Torrell, the Executive Director of Just Buffalo, spoke at the press conference along with Gail Johnstone, President of the Community Foundation for Greater Buffalo which helped to secure a matching grant from the Kellogg Foundation.

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